



Office for Standards
in Education

COMBINED INSPECTION REPORT

URN 321529

DfES Number: 581303

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date	01/12/2003
Inspector Name	Christine Tipple

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type	Sessional Day Care
Setting Name	Stepping Stones Pre-School York
Setting Address	Hurst Hall 1 Border Road, Towthorpe York North Yorkshire YO32 5SR

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name	The Committee of Stepping Stones Pre-School 1061711
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ORGANISATION DETAILS

Name	Stepping Stones Pre-School
Address	Hurst Hall 1 Border Road, Towthorpe York North Yorkshire YO32 5SR

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care in accordance with the National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding; and that the nursery education for funded three and four year old children is of an acceptable quality. Inspection of nursery education also identifies strengths and weaknesses so that providers can improve the quality of educational provision and help children to achieve the early learning goals (elgs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

If the setting has been inspected previously, an action plan will have been drawn up to tackle issues identified. This inspection, therefore, must also assess what progress has been made in the implementation of this plan.

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Pre-School opened in August 2000. It operates from the main hall in the Community Centre on the Strensall Army Camp. It has access to it's own outside play area. Strensall is situated east of the centre of York. The group serves both the army camp and the local area.

There are currently 51 children aged from two years to five years old on the register. This includes eleven funded three-year-olds and 29 funded four-year-olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group support children with special needs.

The group opens Monday to Friday from 09:15am to 12:00 and afternoons 12:30 to 15:00. The group opens in term time only.

There are four full-time staff employed, which includes the manager. One staff member has a relevant childcare qualification. Three other staff are on childcare training programmes.

The group is committee run, receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, and is a member of the Pre School Learning Alliance.

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Pre-school offers good care for the children. Staff promote a caring and supportive environment for the children, which provides a welcoming relaxed atmosphere. Staff give high priority to the safety and security of the children both indoors and outdoors. Children are settled and have good relationships with both their key worker and all other staff. Their behaviour is managed effectively and in a consistent, caring way by the staff.

Staff are supported in attending training, they have regular staff meetings and individual appraisals as part of their self development. The group operates a key worker system that provides continuity for both the children and their parents.

There is a good selection of toys, equipment and resources available which offers

the children a variety and selection of activities. There is planning in place which supports and develops the children's learning through play.

Information provided for parents is good, there is an information booklet and regular newsletters. Details of activities provided and other relevant information is displayed on the notice board. Parents are invited to be members of the management committee. However, some aspects of the groups documentation need to be reviewed in the areas of administration of medication, and the recording of parents access to their children's records.

What has improved since the last inspection?

At the last inspection the group agreed to make improvements to, staff qualifications, provision of drinking water for the children,. They also agreed to establish a complaints procedure for parents.

All of the above actions have been addressed. Staff have extended their development by accessing training to enhance their qualifications in childcare. Children have access to drinking water throughout the whole session and there are details in place for parents on the complaints procedure.

What is being done well?

- Staff work well as a team, they have individual appraisals to identify training needs, which are supported by the management committee. Staff are involved in all areas of the planning of activities and assessments of the children. The key worker system provides a consistent approach for both the children and parents. This is supported with the groups policies and procedures.
- The facilities available enable the children to have a good selection of resources and equipment that provide variety and promote learning through play. Access for the children encourages independence through self selection.
- Staff manage the children's behaviour in a consistent, calm and supportive way. This provides the children with clear boundaries and encourages them to share, take turns and respect others.
- Partnership with parents is good, they are able to be part of the management committee and contribute in other ways. Information provided gives parents details of all areas of the groups policies and practices. There are regular newsletters, open evenings and an informative notice board.

What needs to be improved?

- the record of parent signatures when medication given to children.

Outcome of the inspection
Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION
<i>All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.</i>
<i>As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.</i>

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection	
Std	Recommendation
7	Ensure the written record of medication given to children is signed by the parents.

INSPECTION OF THE NURSERY EDUCATION PROVISION FOR FUNDED THREE AND FOUR YEAR OLDS.

How effective is the nursery education?

Stepping Stones Pre-school provides children with a happy and welcoming atmosphere, where children settle well so that overall they make generally good progress towards the early learning goals. They make very good progress in personal social and emotional, mathematical development and communication language and literacy. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development they make generally good progress.

The quality of the teaching is generally good. Staff have a good understanding of the early learning goals. Staff are enthusiastic and motivated, they work well together to provide an interesting and varied curriculum. However there is a need for staff to develop access and free choices to resources for the children, particularly in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Planning overall is good and the sessions are well planned and run smoothly. The assessment of the children is carried out by their key worker. However the links between the assessments and the stepping stones need to provide a more effective method of recording children's progress.

Leadership and management is very good. There is a strong commitment by staff to developing their practice. Staff attend training and hold regular team meetings, they are supported through staff appraisals.

Partnership with parents is generally good. Parents are provided with a range of information on all areas of the pre-school's practice. They are able to be part of the management committee, and there are two open sessions a year where parents can discuss their child's progress with the key worker, as well as daily contact. However, parents' comments and contributions to this process need to be developed.

What is being done well?

- Children are confident, well-motivated and are able to form relationships with adults and each other. They are encouraged to participate in the activities, either on their own or part of a group. Their behaviour is good.
- Practical activities are used to enable the children to communicate effectively, practice their writing skills and develop letter sounds. They are encouraged to talk about their feelings, make lists, engage in role play and games.
- Children are given regular opportunities through every day activities to begin to use their knowledge of numbers to solve simple mathematical problems e.g. counting the number of cups at snack time.
- Leadership of the pre-school is supportive and there is effective team work. This ensures the continual improvement through monitoring and a commitment to staff development.

What needs to be improved?

- the links between the children's assessments and the stepping stones to provide the most effective methods of recording children's progress
- the development of access and choices to resources for both three and four-year-olds in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The pre-school has made generally good progress since the last inspection. Staff have provided a range of IT equipment which is accessible for the children. The links with home and the pre-school are established with a home reader programme, this includes comments from parents. However, this is still not being used fully as parents don't always return the books or comment.

SUMMARY OF JUDGEMENTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

The children are happy and confident in their surroundings. They are interested and involved in the activities provided which positively supports their learning. The children work well in groups and on their own, and are developing independence in their personal care and in selecting resources. Behaviour is managed well in a consistent and caring way.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Judgement: Very Good

Children interact positively with adults and each other. They are able to use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences. They have a range of opportunities, both three and four-year-olds, to practice their writing skills and develop their letter sounds, and staff enable the children to begin to recognise familiar words. There is a home reader programme in place for parents and their children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Very Good

There are resources in place that provide the children with a range of opportunities through practical everyday activities to use their knowledge of numbers to solve simple practical everyday problems, this is for both the three and four year olds. Staff use number recognition and mathematical concepts in their interaction with the children e.g. subtraction addition, sequencing, shape and positional language.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Judgement: Generally Good

The children are provided with a variety of experiences that includes investigation and using their senses. Children talk about family and their own lives and experiences both past and present. There is a selection of tools and materials that enable the children to construct and assemble. There are programmable toys and access to a computer for the children. However, the opportunities to extend their learning through more access to the resources independently is not reflected in the planning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Judgement: Generally Good

Children are confident in moving about and negotiating their surroundings, both the three and four year olds have good control and co-ordination. There are opportunities for children to use both fine and gross motor skills in the range of equipment and resources provided, both indoors and in the outside play area. Children display an understanding of hygiene practices and keeping healthy, this is more evident in the four-year-olds.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	
Judgement:	Generally Good
Children are able to express themselves through a variety of activities and resources provided e.g. collage, model making, painting, music and movement. A range of the children's work is well presented and displayed. Children engage in imaginative and role play using their own experiences. They play co-operatively as part of a group. However, the opportunities for children to extend and select resources that promote choices and independence are limited.	
Children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is fostered appropriately.	

OUTCOME OF THE INSPECTION

The provision is acceptable and is of good quality overall. Children are making generally good progress towards the early learning goals. The next inspection will take place in three to four years time.

WHAT THE SETTING NEEDS TO DO NEXT: THE KEY ISSUES

- review the links between the children's assessments and the stepping stones, in order to provide an effective method of recording children's progress
- provide more opportunities for both three and four-year-olds to extend access to materials and resources in both creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

The provider must draw up an action plan within 40 working days of receipt of this report showing how the key issues detailed above will be addressed. The action plan must be made available to all parents and to the Local Authority if required. An evaluation of the action taken will form part of the next inspection of funded nursery education.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.